

International Review of Humanities Studies
www.irhs.ui.ac.id, e-ISSN: 2477-6866, p-ISSN: 2527-9416 ,
Vol.3, No.1, January 2018
pp. 97-109

**REGIONAL EXPANSION, IDENTITY CRISIS AND THE
PARADOX OF HUMAN RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT
IN THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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Abstract

The EU is very concerned with the implementation of Human Rights, so it has become the basic value and the main terms in its membership¹. The EU's desire to expand the territorial prompts efforts to discipline the implementation of Human Rights is intensified in order to increase the number of members. However, individual identity, how one defines itself as a nation, and freedom of expression are also major points in Human Rights. This is clearly a major obstacle that unknowingly appears in the territorial expansion efforts being undertaken by the European Union. The most obvious and most recent example is the occurrence of Brexit through the EU referendum in June 2016 which resulted in the United Kingdom having to quit the EU membership. This is a major blow to the EU, because in the course of territorial expansion, the EU would have to lose one of its larger member states. This paper discusses the paradox of the virtue of Human Rights as a value that is upheld within the EU and the freedom of individuals and nations in defining themselves, as well as an identity crisis which is beginning to undermine the comfort of life in society.

Keywords: EU, EU Expansion, Brexit, Identity, Identity Crisis, Human Rights

The economic integration undertaken by the Inner Six on the basis of mutual interest for the attainment of peace in mainland Europe in the late 1950s is a remarkable achievement and has had a tremendous impact on the world's political and economic map. Why does this happen? It is not difficult to find the answer to this question, only by chronologically tracing the great events of World War II can we then be guided to the answer.

Germany's domination through Hitler with his Nazis has devastated the economic, social, political, and cultural life of almost all of Europe's mainland regions. Post-war is a difficult time for every country on the mainland of Europe, not least for Germany which was eventually able to be paralyzed by the power of the allied countries. From this point of view we can understand that both the colonized state and the German state itself have a common goal in terms of economic recovery in order to re-establish state infrastructure and run a sovereign state life. The end result from this point of view is the realization of welfare in society in every country in Europe.

¹ Check: *Copenhagen European Council* (June 1993)

However, if we conduct the study from another perspective, from the perspective of colonized countries and war crimes victims caused by Germany's infinite dominance in Europe at the time, a far more important objective than the economic recovery for the acquirement of welfare in social life within every country in Europe is the realization of lasting peace on the European continent. Though seemingly an exaggeration, this cannot be underestimated, even more so if we can position ourselves as someone who has experienced a very traumatic life during wartime, then we may have the same inclination, that there is nothing more important in this world than the attainment of lasting peace. This thinking is quite logical because it is impossible to accomplish economic growth; let alone achieve good welfare in life's society, if the threat of war is constantly undermining the continent of Europe.

On the basis of these two great ideals² the Inner Six sits together discussing co-operation that can give a positive impact on the recovery and economic growth of each country as well as the achievement of lasting peace goals in continental Europe.

Bias Interests in European Economic Integration

The European unification initiated by the Inner Six in the fields of natural resource and economic management has really gained an outstanding success. The control of natural resource management as a raw material for war equipment that can withstand the possibility of unilateral domination by a large country has at the same time become the forerunner of economic recovery and growth for the Inner Six.

Great success in the early stages of economic integration indirectly demands cooperation among member countries in other sectors, especially in sectors closely linked to the economic sector, such as the presence of market, the movement of human resources of economic production performers, the capital flow, new policies in border tariffs, quality standardization, product safety that may circulate in the member country market, and leading up to monetary integration. Therefore, inevitably cooperation and integration in other sectors must be realized in order to achieve optimal results of economic integration that has been done by the Inner Six with the aim of achieving the two great ideals.

This led to an increase in the number of countries on the continent of Europe declaring to join the community initiated by the Inner Six. Less than 3 decades since the beginning of the economic community in Europe the number of member states in the community has increased. Currently the number of member countries has even reached 27³, a figure already reduced by the release of the United Kingdom from the European Union.

² The two great ideals in question are: 1. perpetual peace on the European continent, 2. Recovery and post-World War II economic growth.

³ Look up: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/external/html/euenlargement/default_en.htm

The desire of many countries in mainland Europe to declare themselves a member joining the community now known as the European Union is concrete evidence that the plan to restore the economic state and economic growth in the post-World War II era have been a very significant success, leading other countries who are outside the community to have an enthusiastic desire to join the community for the sake of economic recovery, to be followed by economic growth and modernization which will provide prosperity in the life of society and state of each member country.

The increasing interest of other countries in mainland Europe over the last two decades is undeniably influenced by the growth in the economic sectors of member countries that have joined the EU. Many small countries in mainland Europe seek to harmonize the order of their state and community life so that it can be included into the category of candidate countries to join the EU.

According to an analysis reported by *Views on European Union Enlargement* in 2009, all respondents are quite optimistic about this expansion plan, and believed it to have many positive impacts:

“A strong majority (92%) of respondents agreed that the integration of the CEE region (meaning those countries that already joined the European Union) had led to increased possibilities to freely move and travel within the European Union. About three-quarters of respondents agreed that the enlargements had contributed to the modernisation and growth in CEE economies (76%), facilitated the spread of democratic values and protection of human rights (73%) and increased the EU’s role in world politics (73%). Positive consequences were mainly seen by younger people (those aged 24 and younger), the more educated (who left school/college at the age of 20 or later) and Europeans living in metropolitan centres” [Eurobarometer, 2009]

The above statement can be seen clearly through the graph below:

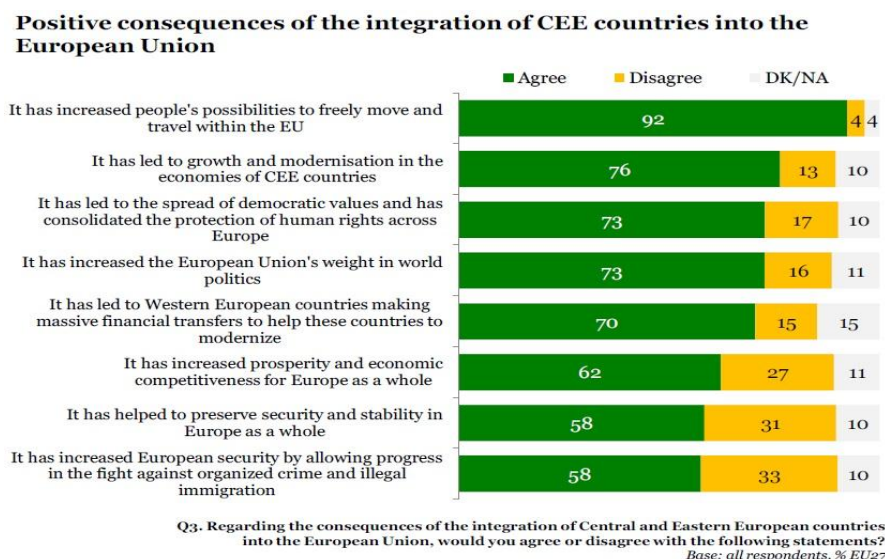


Figure 1

Source: Eurobarometer, *Analitical Report Views on European Union Enlargment*.
Released in February 2009

From the Inner Six camp the expansion of the number of members is a step that had to be done, because this step is considered able to strengthen the position of the European Union in the field of international politics.

*“Similarly, there was relatively little doubt in the European Union that the addition of the newest Member States had **increased the European Union’s weight in world politics**: Those who agreed with this statement outnumbered those who held the opposite viewpoint by at least a two to one margin in each country. In this regard, Czech respondents were most sceptical (27% disagreed), while agreement was highest in Slovenia (84%), Luxembourg (83%) and Finland (82%). “ [Eurobarometer, 2009].*

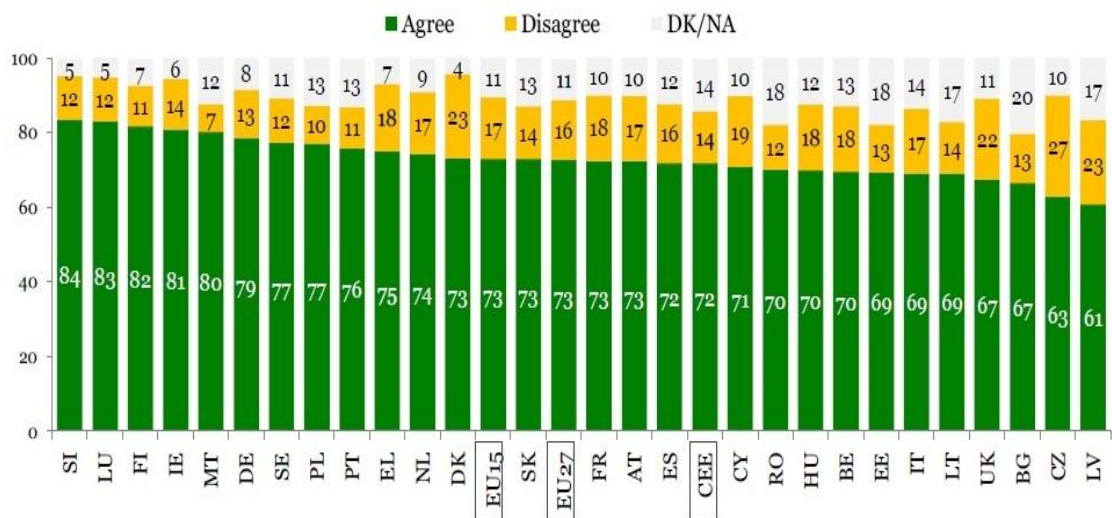
On the contrary, small countries in Europe declaring them to join the EU had been based more on pragmatic goals in terms of recovery and economic growth:

*“Finally, manual workers gave less importance to human rights and democratic values, and **they were the most pragmatic in the sense that they considered economic criteria to be more important in comparison with the....”** [Eurobarometer, 2009].*

France who has a vested interest in retarding the actions of the feared German individual who may again become a "colonizer" in their own continent, is always attempting to negotiate with Germany who has other interests, namely the restoration of the German state's good name which was ruined by the World War II and also to create a track record of a new German state that can be accepted by the international world, in order to be able to "mingle" with the international world that holds a very important meaning in the national economic growth in the country of Germany. [Kraus, 2008]

Not only are the Inner Six's personal interests - notably France and Germany - but the EU as a community - with all the member states that have joined - also have the belief that the EU's expansion can raise prestige and increase the political power of the EU in international politics. This statement is reinforced by a graph of survey results by Eurobarometer released not long ago in February 2009.

It has increased the European Union's weight in world politics



Q3. Regarding the consequences of the integration of Central and Eastern European countries into the European Union, would you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 Base: all respondents, % by country

Figure 2

Source: Eurobarometer, *Analitical Report Views on European Union Enlargement*.
 Released in Februari 2009

Identity Crisis of the Member States

Two camps⁴ with different aims related to the community of European countries provided opportunities for the expansion of territory that progressed rapidly. The matter was addressed very pragmatically by other small countries in mainland Europe in its preparation by aligning the community and state life standards already established by the pioneer country⁵.

Small countries outside the community made every effort possible to harmonize all aspects of life within their respective countries in order to achieve the requirements that must be met for a smooth process of acceptance into EU membership. This fact divides the lives of the society within every national state that is not yet incorporated in the EU community. The elite group constantly strives for changes within each country to meet the requirements set by the community⁶. Meanwhile, on the other hand, the people's groups (lower middle class) are forced to adapt to changes occurring within their respective countries.

⁴ The camps mentioned here are: the Inner Six and the strongholds of countries in continental Europe that are not / are not yet incorporated in the community

⁵ Conditions for membership in a community now called the European Union: 1. Human Rights Enforcement, 2. Implementation of Democracy, 3. Clarity of laws and state laws, and 4. Attention to environmental conservation [McLaren, 2006]

⁶ What is meant by "community" in this paper is the European Union

This is a very risky thing in the state and public life because people within each sovereign state have customs and local rules closely linked to the history and culture of each country's identity that has been handed down for centuries by their ancestors, from generations to generations.

For example, it is not easy to neglect the role of the church and God's role in the life of society whose early civilization was closely related to the institution of the Catholic church. On the basis of the main terms relating to Human Rights, there is no compelling reason to discriminate against those who do not have cultural roots from the Catholic Church. This has caused great upheaval in a social life which for centuries has dogmatically upheld and put forward their life on the foundation of the Catholic Church. This is certainly very contrary to the idea of protecting minorities, especially those related to cultural identity as set forth in chapter 6 in the Maastricht Treaty⁷.

On one hand, indeed most European countries have the roots of its civilization growth from the Catholic Church. But on the other hand, the Maastricht Treaty which puts emphasis on the enforcement of Human Rights and the protection of minority groups should automatically be able to withstand the preservation of certain divine symbols and beliefs so that secular ideology becomes the only option if it wants to join the community. This is certainly not an easy task because many small countries in mainland Europe have been educated with certain dogmatic dogmas and beliefs for centuries.

Although in general it can be said that European culture and civilization was once one culture, that is a culture and civilization sourced from ancient Greek and Roman civilization, in its modern era development - especially in the pre and

⁷ 1. *The Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, **respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms**, and the rule of law, principles which are common to the Member States.*

3. ***The Union shall respect the national identities of its Member States.***

Moreover, the treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam (1997) included an amendment of the Treaty establishing the European Communities, originally signed in Rome in 1957. The modified version of the Treaty of Rome contains a specific title for culture, which was later also incorporated in the constitutional draft. As the corresponding paragraphs affirm:

1. ***The Union shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.***

2. *Action by the Union shall be aimed at encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action in the following areas:*

(a) *improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples;*

(b) *conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of European significance;*

(c) *non-commercial cultural exchanges;*

(d) *artistic and literary creation, including in the audiovisual sector.*

4. *The Union shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of this Constitution, **in particular in order to respect and to promote the diversity of its cultures.**[Kraus, 2008]*

post industrial revolution - each region finally tried to delve, create, and establish their identity as a country that had its own individual culture which was different from the culture of the countries around it.

The national language, customs, and conventions of norms within each country's society are foundations which are indirectly overshadowed by the efforts made by the elite of each country in the fulfillment of conditions in order to become a member within the EU community.

Not only has the state's identity crisis become a national issue in countries outside the community that holds the aspiration to become members within the European Union, but this is now also a very sensitive issue within every EU member country⁸.

The crisis in the Euro Zone that is shaking the national economy of each member country, the number of productive age unemployment, and followed by the social welfare guarantee of each country that is threatened to disappear has become the main reason for people to look negatively towards EU's presence and its territory expansion plans.

The EU community has now split into two camps, the *Europhile* stronghold: a stronghold that holds positive regard towards EU's existence and supports the extension of its number of members, and the *Europesimist* stronghold: a camp that holds negative regard towards the EU and refuses to extend the membership of member states, on the contrary, this stronghold wants an internal correction within the EU by seriously taking rescue action in the Euro Zone and restore the welfare of society.

Many of the *Europesimists* are seriously reexamining the true identity of the national state. They are confused with the condition of the state's supranational politics. It's come into realization that the core identity which is the root of civilization that was created by the ancestors of each member country has been occupied by an ultra national state life.

In a very difficult economic situation like today, negative sentiments toward the EU are mushrooming in almost every social life of each EU member country. *Europesimist* sees what is happening today in societal life in Europe as a result of unilateral efforts of domination and control by large, economically powerful countries with vested interest within the EU.

Unity and togetherness, as well as European uniformity heralded by the elite within the EU does not seem to be fully visible in real life. None of the EU communities are known to introduce themselves as Europeans in any international event, they would spontaneously introduce themselves as Dutch, German, French, English, Italian, Spanish, Greek, and other nationalities. This raises a major question within each individual of the EU community. There is no compelling reason that encourages them to automatically claim themselves as a European in the international arena, but they are confused with the origins of their national

⁸ The term PIGS, which stands for Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Spain, and some mention of PIIGS with the addition of Italy, is the most affected member of the European Union during the Euro zone crisis

state. For example, if I were Dutch, I would be different from a German, Spanish, French, Italian, English, Greek, and others, but politically, economically, and monetarily all of us are EU citizens. Can I give up my Dutch identity to become an EU citizen? This means I consciously deny the efforts of my country's ancestors and national dignitaries. Can I become a citizen of the European Union? This is difficult to digest because if examined further, one of the main requirements of an EU membership has been refuted here.

A concrete and highly recent example of the above exposure is the occurrence of Brexit⁹ not long ago, in 2016. The outcome of the EU referendum held on 23 June 2016 was surprising as it ultimately required the United Kingdom to quit the EU membership. The picture below is a graph of the results of the EU referendum which caused Great Britain having to leave the EU membership.

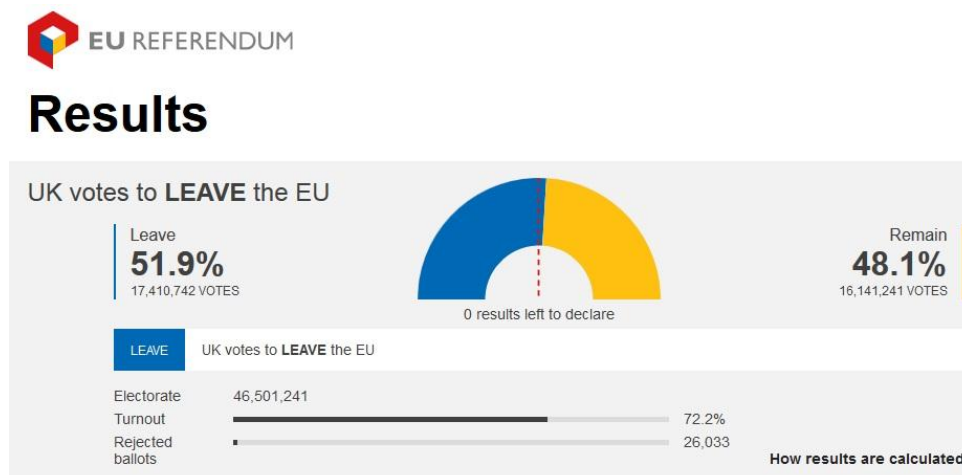


Figure 3

Source: http://www.bbc.com/news/politics/eu_referendum/results

Polemic in Community Life in the European Union Geert Wilders

The 17 minute short film, entitled *Fitna* and released on March 27, 2008, became a global major issue, especially in cyberspace. Geert Wilders, the architect of the film, is a Dutch politician who since the release of the film has until now become more famous and has an important role in the political scene in the Netherlands. Wilders' fame is closely related to the content contained in the film.

Fitna - from Wilders' perspective - displays violent teachings within Islam against anything that is considered contrary to Islamic values. The dominance of immigrants from Turkey, Morocco and Indonesia, known as countries with followers of Islam and having a culture influenced by Arabic and Islamic cultures

⁹ Brexit is an acronym of Britain Exit (from EU membership, ed.). On June 23rd, 2016 Britain held an EU referendum to determine whether the United Kingdom would leave the EU membership or not.

are the main targets in the film. At least this can be proven from Wilders' political actions post publication of the film. Starting out with the spreading of hatred against Islam as a religion, and seemingly to continue with an anti-immigrant movement by bringing the issue of "Dutch purity". The issue of "Dutch purity" can be translated as a desire to have a Dutch identity, as a Dutch nation. However, this idea is very much contradictory to the value of Human Rights which is one of the important values in the membership of the European Union.

Theo van Gogh

Four years before *Fitna* was released there was an appalling event in the Netherlands, the murder of a famous Dutch director, Theo van Gogh. Theo van Gogh was murdered by a Dutch muslim of Moroccan descent on November 2nd 2004, a lapse of three months from the presentation of his short film entitled *Submission*.

Submission - from the perspective of van Gogh - tells the story of a form of harassment against women that was displayed by some excerpts of Quran verses written on a (semi) naked female body.

Indirectly through certain racial and religious perspectives, van Gogh's film can be interpreted as a form of van Gogh's protest against a religion that has certain values and norms that are contrary to the Dutch identity as a nation. From this perspective it is seen that the idea of self-identity as a nation and a citizen of the Netherlands could no longer be withheld, even though in its manifestations violates the diversity and rights respected within the EU.

Pim Fortuyn

Two years before the tragedy of Theo van Gogh's murder, precisely on May 6th 2002, a Dutch politician who was also popular at the time was killed by a Muslim Dutch citizen of Moroccan descent. The politician who openly declared himself a homosexual was murdered by Islamic extremists after he declared to the Dutch public that Islam is an underdeveloped culture and if it is legalized he (Fortuyn,ed.) would close the access of Muslim immigrants so that there will be no more Muslim immigrants entering the Netherlands.

The desire to distance a particular culture and belief can be seen as an attempt to show a person or a nation's existence, that the person or nation also has their own identity which is different from that of other people and nations.

Paris, Brussel, dan Frankfurt

Not only in the Netherlands, other EU member states, which are also pioneer nations for the EU presence that we know today also have a polemic that has claimed quite a lot of fatalities in its social life.

The polemic in social life is ultimately fueled by a negative sentiment towards immigrants - especially Muslim immigrants - who are increasingly

entering EU member states. Some examples include the shooting in the case of "Charlie Hebdo" in Paris, the bombing at 7 different points in Paris, the bombing at Zaventem airport, Brussels and at the metro station in Maalbeek, Brussels, and the attack of civilians with sharp weapons in the city of Frankfurt.

The declining economic conditions in the Euro zone, worsened by the growing number of immigrants living in EU member countries, has gradually but surely awakened a sense of national self-identity within the EU. This is not in line with the Unity in Diversity ideology promoted by the European Union.

A diversity that can be superficially understood as an association of many nations within a community should have been able to be better understood by tracing the history of each member countries' individual diversity, especially member nations with a history as colonizers, since they are the largest contributors to diversity which has long existed in most of the EU pioneer countries.

The polemics of life within EU societies found lately are more likely as a reaction to the elite's attitudes that is increasingly opposed to the existing diversity which is contrary to the past where it had always been boasted as an example of their success in applying multiculturalism in their respective countries.

Anti -Immigrants

The 9/11 terror attacks in America can serve as a lifeline marker towards the changing societal life in the EU. Major states of the European Union are one by one showing these changes through cases that are gradually surfacing with issues of discrimination towards the origin and religion of their citizens.

Citizens of certain racial and religious origins are increasingly being identified as a group of people who are always into mischief - not infrequently criminal - and became the main symbol of the increasing number of problems and conflicts that was arising in the life of the community in each member country.

This fact was seen as a golden opportunity by most politicians in every member country. Anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic ideology seemed to be something that can be used as a key to success for a politician if one wanted to boost their popularity in the domestic political scene.

This has been the cause of several killings of some prominent figures in the Netherlands, in France this was also an issue that caused chaos between a gypsy group and citizens of Maghreb descent with other citizens that were de facto of EU natives.

The Paradox of Human Rights Value in the EU

Recognition of Human Rights which is the main value of the EU can be interpreted that everyone within the EU community has the right to express themselves as an individual growing from different cultural roots in each country and having different culture, customs and norms from other member states.

However, in its implementation every citizen of Europe is required to have one identity, namely as the EU community.

The residues of this social phenomenon are very harmful in the international community. The identity crisis and the awareness that the sovereignty of the state is increasingly neutralized by the EU can generate negative sentiments against immigrants from whose roots are not Europeans with all their historical understanding and cultural growth.

It is undeniable that these facts that have lead Nicolas Sarkozy, David Cameron, and Angela Merkel to consciously signal to the public that the multicultural society's life within each country has failed. If the elites of the EU dominator state have consciously stated that multicultural life in society within their respective countries has failed, then what will happen in the life of society in general in continental Europe considering the large number of immigrants who had been invited individuals brought in to rebuild the infrastructure of the devastated countries as a result of World War II?

The facts found in today's reality are quite sad, since the descendants of previous generations that were "invited guests" who played a big role in the process of restoring the infrastructure of the destroyed countries after World War II is now a marginalized minority group labeled as a source of major problems in the public life of EU member states, and not infrequently these problems end in high-level criminal acts, such as terrorist crime.

Conclusion

The success of economic integration experienced by the Inner Six opens the opportunity to undertake a long-term plan of expanding the territory of the EU community by issuing several conditions that countries wishing to join the community have to fulfill. On the other hand, the success of economic integration within the community has become a mirage for small countries seeking to improve the welfare of life and social upgrading in international life. With such a fact, there has been a distortion in the economic integration from two different points of view, 1. From the point of view of the community that wants to expand its members, that is more to the political image of the international¹⁰ world, 2. From the point of view of small countries outside the members who want to join the community, which holds a pragmatic goal towards the recovery and improvement of the country's economy¹¹.

The distortion of interest in this integration effort becomes an important factor in the life of the society and the state within each member country. This is more pronounced when there is a crisis in the Euro Zone that has a very bad impact on social life within each national country. The emergence of two camps in view of the existence of the European Union, namely the stronghold of *Europhilia* and *Europesimist* is concrete evidence that the EU is currently

¹⁰ Check Figure 2

¹¹ Check Figure 1

arguably failing in creating Unity in diversity¹². In the end, this bias integration became more apparent after the Brexit case in June 2016.

Thus, it can be concluded that the EU's efforts and ideals in expanding territory are a form of coercion against human values within countries wishing to join the EU, since countries that has the desire to join forces have been mildly forced to align with the values that serve as the basis of EU ideology.

This can certainly be seen as a paradox of human rights enforcement that is actually also one of the main basic values in EU ideology. The negative impact of this alignment is how sparks of identity search has emerged in each individual member states, so that the EU's identity as a community has begun to be threatened, since the trend of returning to ancestral origins is the only option in the search for a person's identity, either as individuals, as well as in life as citizens of a nation.

If the application of values in Human Rights is truly implemented by the EU in accordance with the ideological basis, then labeling should not be put to particular groups of people - especially minorities - because it is in opposition to the value of protection and equality of minorities.

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¹² Unity in diversity is an EU slogan which states that the diversity found in Europe can become one under the EU umbrella.

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